

Kennedy Says Congressmen Can Quiz Powers Later

LEGISLATORS TO BE GIVEN DATA ON U-2

Flier Going To A New Hideout, Will Be Available To Press

By WILLIAM KNIGHTON, JR.

Washington, Feb. 14—President Kennedy said today that U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers will be permitted to tell his story to congressional committees and answer questions put to him by the legislators.

The appropriate committees of Congress also will receive information Government intelligence agents obtained from him during questioning at Ashford Farms, near Easton, Md., where he was taken secretly after he landed in the United States Saturday on his release from a Soviet prison.

Removed From Hideaway

It is understood that interrogation of the reconnaissance plane pilot, convicted in Russia on spying charges, will continue at a new Government hideaway, for he has been removed from the brick mansion in Talbot county.

Mr. Kennedy also related at his press conference this morning that Powers has been cooperating voluntarily with the Government in the questioning and said the press will get a chance to ask him questions as soon as possible.

The President opened his press conference with a voluntary statement on the Powers case, saying there had been a number of questions directed to the White House and other Government agencies concerning the release by the United States of Col. Rudolph Abel, convicted head of the Soviet spy apparatus in the country, in exchange for Powers and Frederick Pryor, the United States student detained for several months in East Germany.

"I Am Deeply Pleased"

"Let me say first," the President stated, "that I am deeply pleased that the pilot, Mr. Powers, and the student, Mr. Pryor, have been released and united with their families.

"I shall be deeply pleased if their release turns out to be a sign of possible significant progress in the lessening of world tensions.

"As for the whereabouts of Mr. Powers, I can state at this time only that he is in this country, that he has seen his father and mother, and that his wife is with him.

"He is undergoing important interviews by appropriate officials of this Government. Mr. Powers is cooperating voluntarily with the Government in these discussions.

"At the conclusion of these discussions, the information derived

from these interviews will be made available to appropriate committees of the Congress, and Mr. Powers will be free to testify before the Congress, should the Congress so wish.

"Mr. Powers will be made available to the press at the earliest feasible moment."

There is no doubt that some committees want to hear Powers' story of his flight part way across Russia, his downing, his capture by peasants, his imprisonment and his interrogation.

Senator Russell (D., Ga.) chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, reported later that John A. McCone, director of the Central Intelligence Agency for which Powers made the flight, has informed him he will make the pilot available to the committee.

Sparkman Comments

He said he would leave it up to the committeemen to decide the issue.

Meanwhile, Senator Sparkman (D., Ala.), acting chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said that group may want to hear the 32-year-old pilot, adding that he also will submit the question to the members.

To Be Free Agent

Two importantly placed members of each committee have said in the past two days Powers should be heard, which might produce a tussle between the two committees to determine which is to have him appear as a witness.

In answer to a question, the

President said Powers would be a free agent to carry on whatever work he chooses when the Government concludes its interrogation of him. He formerly was an Air Force pilot and resigned to fly for the CIA.

Mr. Kennedy also was asked if it is possible at this time to judge whether he was shot down by a Soviet missile, as Premier Khrushchev has claimed, or was forced down by mechanical trouble.

He declined to answer, saying this should wait "until the Government has finished talking about these matters with Mr. Powers, and then, as I say, he will be available and will give whatever information would be in the national interest to give."

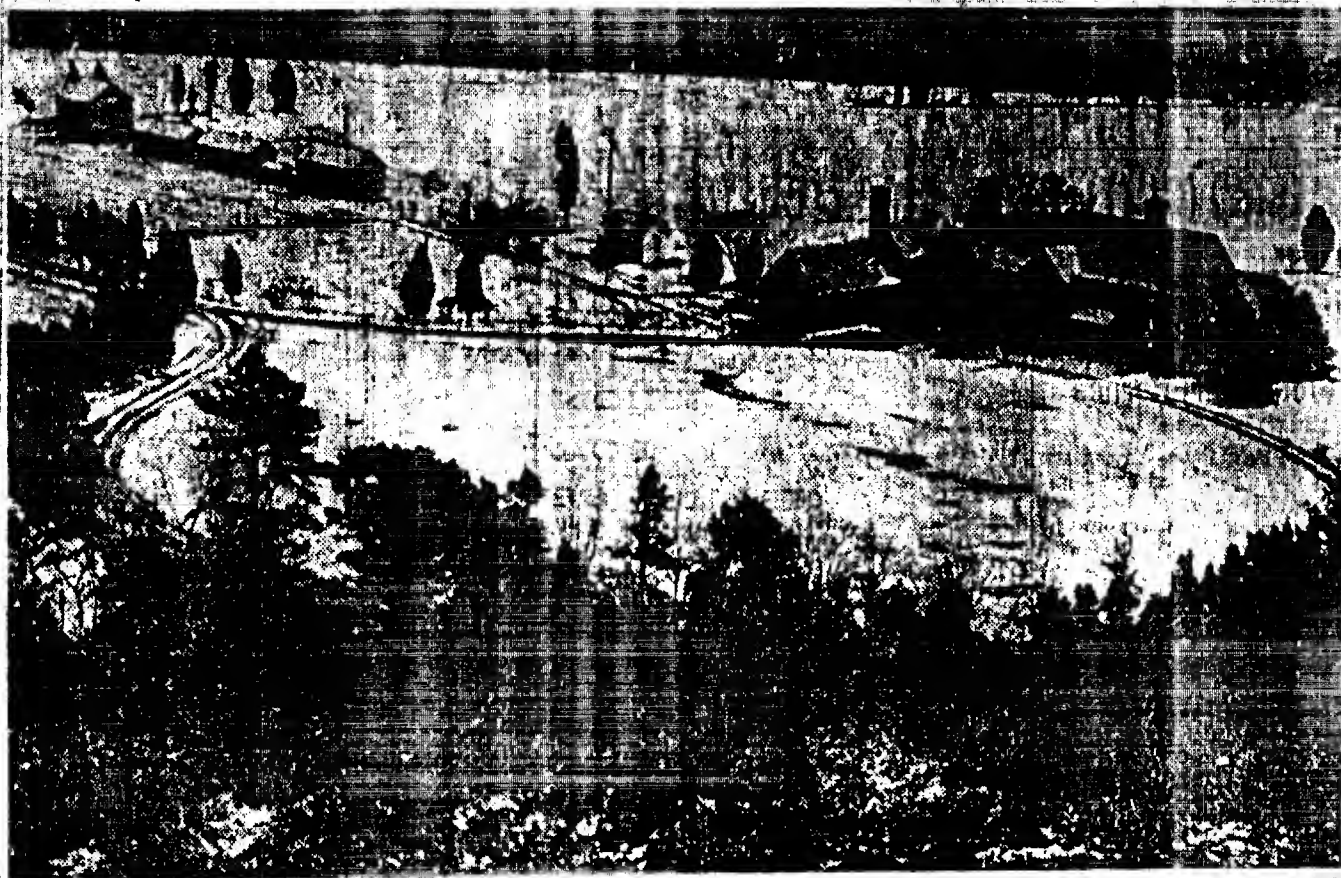
In this connection, Mr. Kennedy was asked if complaints from congressmen that they never know how much money they are voting for the CIA have any validity. Funds for the hush-hush agency are hidden in other budgets.

Gives Explanation

"The budget for the CIA is handled by the members of the appropriations committee of the House and Senate," the President replied.

"It is bipartisan and includes members who are the most senior and the most experienced in the area and they are fully informed.

"Quite obviously there are some limitations on what we are able to reveal in the national interest, but in my judgment the budgetary procedures which have been followed in the past have combined congressional responsibility and also protection of our vital interests."



POWERS HIDEAWAY—This is an air view of the mansion and grounds on Government-owned Ashford Farms near Easton, Md., where Francis Gary Powers, U-2 spy pilot, was taken secretly after returning to the United States Saturday on release from a Soviet prison. Questioning of the pilot is expected to continue at some new, undisclosed hideout. AP photo